

### *Invisible Wounds Caucus Hearing Focuses on Top Service-Connected Disability*

Washington D.C. – On Wednesday, Congressman Harry Teague hosted an Invisible Wounds Caucus hearing to discuss the impact of tinnitus on soldiers returning from war. Tinnitus, a condition in the brain that is more commonly known as “ringing in the ears,” has been identified as the number one service-connected disability for soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan for the last 3 years. The discussion focused on available treatment options for soldiers suffering from tinnitus and current research being done, as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs’ approach to diagnosing and treating tinnitus.

“Tinnitus is a serious problem that not only doesn’t have a cure but hasn’t been getting the attention it truly deserves,” Harry Teague said. “We need a more comprehensive screening plan that includes active duty soldiers as well as those under the VA’s care. We owe it to the soldiers and their families and we cannot stop until we are providing the best possible level of care.”

The panel of speakers included representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the University of Buffalo’s Centers of Hearing and Deafness, AMVETS, and the American Tinnitus Association. The participants discussed the progress that has been made in addressing tinnitus and the impact that increased funding for research and development could have on providing treatment and finding a cure.

"The American Tinnitus Association appreciates Congressman Teague's continued dedication to the issue of tinnitus. His demonstrated leadership is helping to bring about real changes in

both public policy and perception of tinnitus, particularly for America's veterans and helping to grow the understanding that tinnitus is not just a symptom of hearing loss, but a real and troubling neurological condition that can impact quality of life for those who suffer,” said Jennifer Born, Director of Public Affairs for the American Tinnitus Association.

Congressman Teague, a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, led a bi-partisan group in forming the Congressional Invisible Wounds Caucus to promote awareness of and solutions for the wounds of war that are unseen, such as mental health and tinnitus, which challenges our service members and veterans. He has made veterans’ issues a top priority, helping to secure advanced appropriations funding for the VA and introducing legislation aimed at addressing and reducing the impact of mental health issues like PTSD have on the lives of returning veterans.



*Harry Teague discusses the latest treatments for Tinnitus during an Invisible Wounds Caucus*